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# The New Country School

## A Survey of Development

By W. K. TATE,

*State Supervisor of Country Schools for South Carolina.*

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## The Youth's Companion and School Improvement

An address delivered by Warren Dunham Foster before a meeting of the Inter-State League for the Betterment of Public Schools, held under the auspices of the Summer School of the South, at the University of Tennessee.

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THE YOUTH'S COMPANION, Boston, Mass.

## For Better Country Schools

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The Companion's campaign for better rural schools is one of fundamental importance. The future progress of the business of farming is at the present time more dependent upon the organization of an efficient rural school system than upon any other one factor. The colleges of agriculture and experiment stations have demonstrated beyond a doubt new and more profitable systems of farming. These systems of farming require intelligence and training for their execution.—F. B. MUMFORD, *Dean College of Agriculture, University of Missouri.*

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The welfare of the country school is inseparably linked not only with the educational interests of country children, but with the prosperity of the basic industry of agriculture. It is the duty of all our people, whether residents of the country or not, to lend their aid to every movement which will tend to create and sustain a country school system that will be so good that no man will find it necessary to remove from his farm home in order to give his children a thorough common school education.—PAYSON SMITH, *State Superintendent of Public Schools, Maine.*

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Commodious and sightly schoolhouses are community assets. Their scientific construction, convenient arrangement and sanitary appointment make for good health and greater efficiency. Their artistic adornment teaches silent but powerful daily lessons in right living, while spacious and beautiful grounds add to the joys and multiply the opportunities of childhood. Money spent for these things is therefore not an expense, but an investment.—W. D. ROSS, *State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Kansas.*

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Success to The Companion's campaign for the improvement of school grounds and buildings. Such improvements will give a general impetus to the whole movement for better education and a more complete and satisfying country life.—C. G. SCHULZ, *State Superintendent of Education, Minnesota.*

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A school expecting to reach the highest degree of efficiency must work under auspicious conditions. These conditions include a comfortable, attractive school building, surrounded by beautiful, well-kept grounds. The condition of the buildings and grounds is a correct index of the appreciation of the community for the school. The parents, and not the children, are to be judged by the appearance of the school buildings and grounds.—W. F. DOUGHTY, *State Superintendent of Education, Texas.*

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# The New Country School.

By W. K. TATE,

STATE SUPERVISOR OF COUNTRY SCHOOLS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA.

One of the results of the increased cost of living in America has been to direct attention to the rural districts, and to awaken a concern for the farmer's welfare that is genuine and universal, if not wholly altruistic.

This interest in the welfare of the farmer is showing itself in many ways. The national and the state governments are spending millions of dollars to spread the agricultural knowledge that will insure an increased productivity of the soil. The agricultural expert has left the academic shades of the college and experiment station, and upon the actual field of the farmer is showing how to apply scientific principles to agriculture. State and nation are beginning to unite their forces to improve the methods of financing farm operations and of marketing the crops to the end that the farmer himself may reap a greater share of the fruits of his labors. Social forces are combining to render more satisfactory the life of the men and women in the country.

The farmers themselves have not been slow to respond to the new conditions. Coöperation is gradually taking the place of purely individual effort, and country life in America will in time assume the stability that it has attained elsewhere.

As elements in this rural stability, social institutions will play an important part. Even the prospect of wealth is not sufficient to keep an intelligent farmer in a community that does not offer satisfactory educational and social opportunities to himself, his wife, and his children. In sections that do not develop the coöperation and the social cohesion necessary to maintain a good school there is a noticeable decrease in farm productivity. Sections that build and maintain good schools have usually succeeded in getting an improved social life along

with them. The inhabitant of the city is just beginning to realize the vital connection between the cost of a pound of butter, or of a dozen eggs, and the equipment of the schoolhouse and the training of the teacher in the rural sections that furnish his food-supply.

The improved status of agriculture is bringing with it a tendency on the part of the more ambitious men and women to remain on the farm. They are not satisfied with an imperfect country school.

We are all familiar with the shoe-box type of country school that until now has prevailed in most rural sections of the United States. The building was the accompaniment of a shifting population that was unwilling to build a schoolhouse more permanent than its own probable period of residence. The house was usually planned by a country carpenter, who made it a copy in miniature of the country church, without any attempt to adapt it especially to school purposes.

This condition of affairs is rapidly changing. Within the last ten years nearly every state department of education in the United States has issued a bulletin containing plans for comfortable and convenient schoolhouses. The buildings frequently provide special rooms for manual training and domestic science, and usually an auditorium. Several of our states employ a school architect and a building inspector to insure in their schools proper sanitation and adaptation to purpose. Many states contribute from the state treasury a percentage of the cost of the country schoolhouse if built in accordance with approved plans.

City school systems have for years enjoyed the advantage of having a trained administrator and supervisor, removed at least one step from the accidents of politics. Until now, we have thrown few safeguards about the country school. There is a growing sentiment in favor of the appointment of state and county educational officials by boards or commissions, just as our university presidents and city superintendents are now selected. The general adoption of this plan will give the country school an opportunity for consistent, harmonious development.

Most of the progressive states now have a state supervisor of rural schools, who devotes himself entirely to the study of the country schools, and to making and carrying out plans for their improvement.

The county is slowly but surely becoming the unit of administration and supervision. The county superintendency of schools is an office destined to increase in influence, prestige, and remuneration. When the appointment is made by a county board of education, the superintendent becomes the expert educational engineer of his county. The more efficient he becomes, however, the more clearly it will be seen that he is not able to do his work without expert assistance. In many of the progressive states, the county superintendent has already under his direction district superintendents, or county supervisors, of rural schools.

Many of the country teachers are untrained and inexperienced. Probably the best place for training these teachers is their own schoolrooms; the demonstration method is most effective.

The State of Kentucky last year employed nearly a hundred



rural school supervisors. Three years ago, one county in South Carolina employed a supervisor of rural schools as an experiment; to-day, one-half the counties of the state have adopted the plan. Through the beneficent assistance of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, county supervisors of negro schools have been employed in numerous counties of the South. These county supervisors take an active part in the introduction and supervision of manual training, domestic science, agricultural clubs, athletic work, and other school and community activities.

Since the city first developed its schools into an efficient

organization, paid the best salaries, and offered the greatest opportunities for advancement, it was only natural that the normal schools should have the city graded school in mind in the training of prospective teachers. Many of the normal schools are gradually modifying their methods and ideals. Many of them have established within easy reach of the campus model rural schools in which their students can have part of their practice-teaching under country conditions.

To supplement the work of the normal school, training courses with practice departments are being established in high schools in one-third of the states. The young men and women who take these courses come from the country, and are in sympathy with country life. After completing the high-school training course, they make efficient teachers in rural communities.

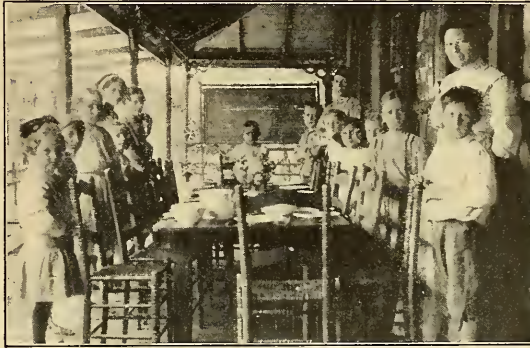
All these movements and efforts, however, are less significant than the evolution that is taking place within the walls of the country school itself. The course of study is undergoing a steady transformation to meet the interests and needs of the country child. The force bringing about this change does not come from without, but is a revolt in the heart of the country itself against outgrown ideals.

We have found out that a course of study that continually fixes the mind of the student on things far away in some city, in some other age, or in some other hemisphere, to the neglect of affairs nearer home, has a tendency to blind him to the opportunities at his door, and to make him dissatisfied with country life. We have discovered that the only way thoroughly to fit a boy for the country is to begin by teaching him the facts of his own environment.

The daily experience of the country boy brings him into intimate contact with the ideas that are fundamental in science, literature, and art. He works in a nature-study laboratory that the city school could not buy. His daily tasks require the practical applications of elementary arithmetic, manual training, and elementary science. The country school has decided to make use of its own advantages, to live its own life, and thus to prepare its boys and girls for an efficient and happy life in the open country.

In the experimental country school on the campus of the Winthrop Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina, the school day usually begins in the garden. Arithmetic is

studied in connection with the measurements of the plots, the planting of the seed, the weighing and estimating of the crop, the study of the soil, the building of the fences. After the youngest children have laid out their garden plots and planted their seed, they must label the beds and make notes in their



LEARNING DOMESTIC SCIENCE AT ROCK HILL.

garden books of the time of planting and other facts connected with the garden. Thus arises the necessity for reading and writing.

The receipts in the school kitchen, and the directions for the work of the day, written on the blackboard, serve as reading



IN THE GARDEN OF THE WINTHROP SCHOOL.

lessons. On the library table are displayed attractive books that deal with the things that the children are studying in the garden and on the playgrounds. The child who has been watching the mocking bird build a nest in the peach tree eagerly reads the bird primer. The group that has found the cocoon,

and has watched the butterfly emerge from it, listens attentively to the story from the butterfly book.

In that school the schoolhouse is like a country home, with its garden, its shop, its kitchen, and its living room. Much of the day the children spend in the open air, either in the garden itself, or on the big piazza. In the shop, there is little formal manual training, but with simple tools the boys and girls make



IOWA CORN CLUB BOY PRIZE-WINNERS.

the things needed in their work. In the kitchen, the luncheon for children and teacher is prepared and cooked during the progress of the school day. Much of the food is produced in the garden, and the children thus study all the processes connected with its production and preparation.

Sometimes the process of adapting the school to country needs consists in widening the walls of the schoolroom until they include the whole school district and its activities. Under the leadership of an especially energetic teacher, the schools of a certain county in Iowa have been notably successful. The county schoolhouse usually does not have an elaborate school garden, but every farm, every orchard, every kitchen, and every dairy in the district constitutes a part of the school equipment. The best farmer in the district is called upon to help to train the boys in corn-judging or in milk-testing. In fact, any man or woman in the community who does something exceptionally well is made a part of the teaching force.

Minnesota is one of the states that are encouraging by liberal appropriations this new kind of country school. The agricultural high school at Cokato, for example, employs a teacher of agriculture who devotes his mornings to his school classes, and his afternoons and Saturdays to demonstration work among the farms of the district. He has taught better seed selection, tile drainage, and dairying. He conducts near the school experimental plots for corn-breeding and the like.

The school is provided with shops for carpentry and forge work, and with equipment for domestic science. It offers each year short courses for young men and women who have passed



the regular school age, but who wish further training in agriculture, farm arithmetic, bookkeeping, manual training, English, and civics. The school day for the short course begins at half past ten, after the morning chores have been finished, and closes at half past two, in order that the students may return home in time for the duties connected with the milking and feeding. The school maintains a teacher-training course in which young men and women are prepared for efficient work in the district schools of the county and state.

The rural school supervisor of a North Carolina county encouraged the pupils and teachers to cultivate cotton in the waste ground round the schools. In one year the pupils of the county cleared from this source six thousand dollars, which was used for school improvement.



A GIRLS' TOMATO CLUB IN SESSION.

Corn clubs and tomato clubs were first organized in the Southern States. The movement has as its object the encouragement of corn-growing and home industries in the South in order to modify the tyranny of King Cotton. The county superintendents and teachers secure the enrollment of boys who can get an acre of ground, and are willing to cultivate it with corn in accordance with directions. At the end of the year the corn is measured, and a report is made to the county superintendent and the county farm demonstration agent. The year is usually closed with a corn show at the county seat.

The tomato club has done a beneficent work in stimulating the raising and canning of vegetables to take the place of the immense quantity that the Southern States have heretofore been compelled each year to buy in other markets.

One of the greatest needs in the rural community is a more satisfactory social life. The distance that separates farmers, and the isolation attendant upon farm life, make necessary a special effort to remedy this defect. The school and the church are the recognized social institutions of the country, and they must work hand in hand to develop a satisfactory and wholesome community social life.

The new country school will always have an auditorium that may be used as a community meeting place. There the school gives its entertainments; the community literary society, the farmers' organizations, and the women's clubs meet there; in it are held the lyceum attractions that are gradually spreading into the country districts. In addition to its grounds and gardens, the country school will have its experimental and demonstration plots, under the direction of the principal and the teacher of agriculture, and there the farmers of the community will meet at intervals for conference and instruction.

The school farm will be tilled with the help of the school horses that pull the wagon in which the children are brought to the school. The playground will expand into a community athletic field, with a special building for the community fair. Beside the schoolhouse will be the teacher's home. The teachers will be appointed for a term of years, will live in the community the year round, and will take a leading part in the community social life. Near the schoolhouse will be the community church, with its resident pastor. About those two regenerated institutions will centre a new country life, efficient and socially satisfying.

# What The Youth's Companion Has Done for School Improvement.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY  
WARREN DUNHAM FOSTER BEFORE A MEETING OF THE INTER-STATE  
LEAGUE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE SOUTH,  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, JULY 11, 1913.

Madam President; Ladies and Gentlemen.

When I was asked to speak to-night, I was under the impression that this was to be a little family party, where a few of us who were interested in ways and means for school improvement would sit round and discuss what had been done and what could be done. And I see that I was right—except in regard to the size of the family. It is because of the size of the family that I am particularly glad to be here.

Notwithstanding the nature of the subject that Miss Moore and Doctor Ogden have given me, I feel free to speak frankly to you because The Companion thinks of itself, not as an outsider but rather as one of you, and because The Companion does not feel that it is a chronicle of the cause of better education, but that it is itself a part, though perhaps a small part, of the movement for better education.

The Companion, however, does not claim the power which evidently belongs to an Iowa weekly. In the last number of this county paper I read, "Owing to the overcrowded condition of our columns, a number of births and deaths are unavoidably postponed this week."

The fact that this was an Iowa paper gives me an excellent opportunity to tell you my only claim to fame. For some time it was my good fortune to be a resident of Iowa, and, indeed, of Story County, where the Knapp family began its great work, and where Mr. Bradford Knapp lived for several years before he moved South.

I am sure that Mr. Knapp has a more kindly and just feeling

toward Iowa than has another distinguished Iowan of my acquaintance. At a dinner in Chicago this man was seated next to a young woman of the gushing type that we all know so well.

"You're from Iowa, Mr. Jones," she gurgled.

"Yes," Mr. Jones admitted.

"A great many bright men come from Iowa," the young person gurgled.

"Yes, and the brighter they are, the quicker they come," Mr. Jones answered, incisively.

The beauty of that story, you know, is that you can tell it on any person, on any state. It's very convenient. Indeed, if it weren't for the fact that Mr. Knapp is to speak *after* me, I might have been tempted to credit the remark to him.



"ROCKY, GRASSLESS, TREELESS, FLOWERLESS."

The roots of the school improvement campaign of The Youth's Companion go back to that September morning, more than sixty years ago, when James B. Upham first trudged to the yard of Fairfax District, No. 17. Before him was the schoolhouse, traditionally dingy and plain. Behind it, and on his right and left, were open fields, which he and his fellows were forbidden to enter. Beyond, to the north, the hills rolled away

to the Canadian line; to the southeast, they merged into a range of the Green Mountains. At the boy's feet was the schoolyard itself—rocky, grassless, treeless, flowerless.

James found the inside of the building as unattractive as its immediate surroundings. The pail and dipper by the door were both rusty, and the water always tasted stale. What little learning the master had he imparted generally by main strength. He undoubtedly gave James and his schoolmates more than he was paid to give.



A FLAG RAISING ON THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE.

Then and there the dreariness of the school and its surroundings so sank in upon James B. Upham that he made the resolution that meant that his life was to be given to the patriotic cause of school improvement. Finally he took the stage for the railway station, and so passed on into the world of active life. In 1872 he joined the staff of *The Companion*, and in a few years became a member of the Perry Mason Company, its publishers. In 1888, at his suggestion, *The Companion* launched a movement to place the American flag over every American schoolhouse.

That *The Companion* should have organized its campaign for school improvement in this way is not at all strange. The *Companion* realized that no campaign has ever been successful unless the people most directly affected heartily support it. School improvement that is real and lasting is impossible without the support of the boys and girls themselves. To arouse the enthusiasm of pupils, patrons, teachers and officials, and to

give them experience in working together, The Companion began its general campaign for school betterment by a definite movement for a definite object—the schoolhouse flag.

Often, indeed, the raising of the flag was followed directly by school improvement of an immediately practical sort. A flag went to a school in Sheridan County, Nebraska; it literally could not be raised, for within a radius of many miles in that dry and treeless region there was nothing which could serve as a pole



SOD SCHOOL BUILDING.

So the teacher put up the banner inside the building, where, against the dark sod wall, it made a bright spot, which, she wrote, continually encouraged effort toward all that was worth while. Her next letter contains a vivid picture of the school patrons at work, plastering the schoolhouse. Her next tells of the building of a shed for the horses which the children rode to school, so that the great hay stack, which gave shelter as well as food, need no longer monopolize the dooryard. The flag may not have created the sentiment that led to one improvement after another, but the flag did put that sentiment to work.

The flag movement grew rapidly. To the thousands of teachers and superintendents who wished to coöperate, The Companion sent circulars and booklets designed to be stimulating and helpful. One method used to arouse the interest of the pupils themselves was a competition for the best essay in each state on the subject: "The Patriotic Influence of the American Flag when raised over Our Public Schools." The prizes, large

American flags, went not to the individual child, but to the school he represented.

In February, 1891, *The Companion* suggested to all state superintendents of public instruction that every public school in the United States celebrate in just the same way the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. School officials enthusiastically agreed, and appointed as an executive committee the superintendents of public instruction of Tennessee, Michigan, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and an editor of *The Companion*. The National Educational Association coöperated heartily. Congress set October 21, 1892, as a holiday. In his proclamation, President Harrison said: "It is peculiarly appropriate that the schools be made by the people the centre of the day's demonstration. Let the national flag float over every schoolhouse in the country, and the exercises be such as shall impress upon our youth the patriotic duties of American citizenship."

From the office of *The Companion*, the executive committee sent to all schools in the country a copy of the uniform programme and information telling how to prepare for and manage the celebration.

October 21, 1892, came. Twelve million American school children stood together as one, and repeated *The Companion's* pledge of allegiance: "I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO MY FLAG AND THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS: ONE NATION INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL." Since that Columbus Day twenty-one years ago, millions of American school children have taken that pledge, so compelling in its heroic simplicity, and millions more are taking it to-day.

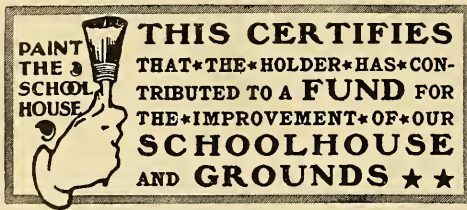
The significance of that one day for the cause of school improvement is evident. For pupils, teachers and superintendents, officials and patrons, from one end of the country to another, to unite even once in holding the same inspiring exercises at the same time proved a powerful preparation—and a necessary one—for the more painstaking, less spectacular efforts which were to follow.

The flag movement went on, and, in fact, is still going on. State after state has passed laws that require the raising of the flag over all of its schoolhouses. *The Companion* has begun the next step, and is now trying to place a silk flag within each schoolroom.

The campaign directed specifically toward the improvement

of schoolhouse and grounds began on April 5, 1900. To each of the one hundred schools sending the best account of improvement, The Companion offered ten historical pictures. Upon request, booklets making practical suggestions for carrying out the work were sent to teachers and patrons.

This undertaking was successful, but it proved the necessity for more definitely organized local work. So that same year The Companion began its intensive state-wide contests for school beautification. Campaigns were carried out in Illinois, New York, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, Vermont, North Carolina, Alabama, West Virginia, Georgia and Oklahoma.



In each state the movement was under the general management of the state superintendent of public instruction. Every organization, official and individual, within reach, likely to be

of service, was asked to cooperate, and evidently did cooperate. It is impossible to pick out a few organizations or individuals who were particularly energetic. No doubt many of you here to-night worked heartily with The Companion.

To all the teachers and to all the interested patrons of all of the contesting schools, The Companion sent helpful booklets and circulars. To aid teachers in raising the necessary money, The Companion gave them school-improvement coupons, little pieces of attractively decorated cardboard, which the pupils purchased themselves or sold to the patrons of the school.

The procedure in Michigan in 1904 is typical. To the five hundred schools recommended by Mr. Delos Fall, State Superintendent, as showing the greatest interest in setting out trees, shrubbery and vines, and improving their grounds in every way, The Companion gave a set of six historical pictures. To the ten schools which had done the best work, The Companion gave a large American flag. In making the minor awards and in selecting the schools to be visited as likely candidates for the major awards, Mr. Fall was guided by detailed information, written by each teacher upon carefully prepared blank forms and corroborated by local officials. Generally, plans and photographs accompanied the written statements.



The pictures were awarded to over five thousand schools, and flags to about one hundred and twenty schools. Of the total number of schools taking part in the contests, there is no definite record, but it is known that there were tens of thousands of them. Although the intensive work was confined to these eleven states, the extensive work covered the nation. In making presents to schools in the states in which there was no state contest, The Companion tried to reward conscientious effort as well as successful achievement.

No discussion of what The Companion has tried to do for school improvement is complete without a glance at the pages of The Companion itself. The Companion does not specialize. It is edited for and read by boys and girls, their fathers and mothers, and grandfathers and grandmothers. The Companion has been powerful and is powerful because it has regarded the normal home as the unit of American life. It has thought in the terms of the family, the whole family, and not of the individuals who make it up. A serious-minded but warm intimacy between these half-million families and The Companion enables it to speak with force on behalf of school betterment.

I do not in any way apologize for this enthusiasm. If I did not heartily believe that The Companion's past had been glorious, that its present is useful to American life, and that its future will be still more gloriously useful, I would not be here to-night.

But how does this enthusiasm affect school improvement?

Directly.

In Number 1, Volume 1, Column 1, of The Companion for April 16, 1827, school improvement is given as one of the subjects which the new publication was founded to discuss helpfully. On the third page of that same issue there appeared an article, "Hints on Education." As a matter of fact, the hints were feeble and the education narrow, but the proof of The Companion's interest is none the less conclusive. And ever since 1827, that interest has found continuous expression.

By imparting information rather than by argument, The Companion influences its readers. It has found that it can safely assume that if its readers have accurate and definite information, set forth in a clear and interesting form, they will be moved to intelligent action. Only upon the basis of information

from persons who are actually engaged in doing whatever is under discussion, or are actually on the spot, watching other people doing, can there be made editorial comment of force, authority and conviction. Records of educational accomplishment, based upon such vital, first-hand knowledge, are certain to lead to energetic imitation all over the country. The best way to discuss a national evil, you know, is to say nothing about the evil, as such, but to tell how real people in a real town did a piece of real work which, if generally imitated, would be

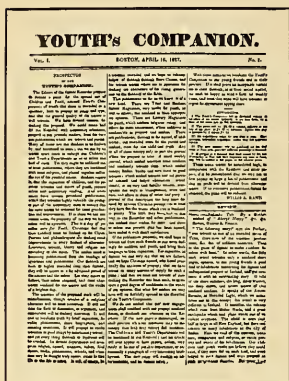
likely to make the evil disappear. Not by talking about the problem of adult illiteracy in the country, but by describing Mrs. Stewart's moonlight schools, will you get constructive action. Not by scolding the district and the teacher because the teacher is not a permanent social force in the community, but by describing Mrs. Josephine Preston's cottage homes in Washington, will you get other communities to take measures that will keep the teacher in one school until she becomes a

real power in the country round about. To get things done, tell concretely how to do them. That has been The Companion's plan.

I must not go into details concerning what The Companion has tried to accomplish through its own columns. The account would have the literary sparkle of an index.

The story of what The Companion has tried to do for school improvement, and is now trying to do, is a simple one that has many parallels. But what account of well-meant effort is new?

I have told the story freely and frankly because I was told to speak freely and frankly, and because I feel sure that you and The Companion are at work upon the same task—a task that must be well performed if this Republic is to endure. If I am right; if The Youth's Companion is marching with you along the road which leads to the betterment of the fundamental institution of American life,—the common school,—The Companion is very grateful to the kind Providence whose existence it has always acknowledged.



# To Aid School Improvement

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**BOOKLETS.** As long as the supply lasts, The Companion will send its booklets upon request. The applicant is under only one obligation—that the publication for which he asks will go to some one who can put it to good use in advancing the cause for which it was published. Booklets yet in print include :

**Ideal Country Schools,**

By the late Andrew S. Draper, Commissioner of Education of New York, James Wilson, formerly Secretary of Agriculture, and William H. Barnes.

**Beautifying Home, Village, and Roadway,**

By Warren H. Manning and others.

**How to Set Out Trees and Shrubbery,**

By L. H. Bailey, Dean of the Cornell College of Agriculture.

**The Teacher's Problem,**

To aid the young teacher in rural school management.

**Suggestions for Home and Farm,**

By Martha Van Rensselaer of the Cornell College of Agriculture, W. T. Sedgwick of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and B. T. Galloway, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

**The New Country School.**

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**Reprinted Editorials Sent on Request Include:**

YOUNG VOTERS AS CITIZENS, THE INCOME TAX, COMMON SENSE AND THE FARM, THE "MOONLIGHT" SCHOOLS, A COMMUNITY PIG, REMAKING NORTH DAKOTA, THE WOMAN OF THE VILLAGE.

**INFORMATION.** For possible use wherever in The Companion place may be found for it, or in answering inquiries from readers interested in school improvement, The Companion is always glad to receive concise statements of significant instances of definite educational progress. We welcome first-hand accounts of sensible attempts to add to the efficiency of the public school system, and to make it of greater service to the home and the community, particularly in the village and open country.

The Companion is glad to attempt to answer questions in the educational field. Often we can be of practical service by acting as a clearing house and referring readers to available sources of information. If you think we can help you, write to us.

**SILK SCHOOLROOM FLAG.** For forty cents The Companion will furnish school officials and teachers a silk flag, 24 x 36 inches in size, a colored copy of the Pledge of Allegiance, and as many schoolroom flag certificates as may be needed. Since the flag is distributed only as a means to further the patriotic ends set forth in this booklet, and is sold at less than cost, applicants must assure us that it will be used only in the public schools.

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*Please Address*

**Extension Department, The Youth's Companion, Boston, Mass.**



## “For Our Schools, Health, Comfort, and Beauty”

— COMMISSIONER CLAXTON

THE schoolhouse is the temple which we erect to the God of childhood. The schoolroom is the home of the child during the most important hours of the most important years of its life. The schoolroom, the schoolhouse, and the school grounds constitute the best index to the degree of civilization and to the ideals of the community. Everything about the school should be beautiful, clean and wholesome. The sanitation should be perfect. The place where children go to prepare for life and gain strength for its duties should not be a hotbed for the germs of disease and death. That the time in school may be used to best advantage, the child should be under the most favorable conditions. No one does his best work otherwise. Since ideals formed in childhood from its environment and daily associations go with us through life, the cleanliness and beauty of schoolhouses and grounds are more powerful than all other agencies in determining the cleanliness and beauty of private homes and public buildings in the communities where the children live as grown-up men and women. The repulsive impressions of ugliness, dirt and disease accumulating from day to day, drive children from school. The attractiveness of beauty, cleanliness, sweetness and comfort increasing from day to day, is more powerful in bringing the child and all its interests to school, and keeping it there, than any attendance laws can ever be. As are the school and the schoolhouse, so will be the home, the city, the state and the nation. For every community the motto should be: “For our Schools, Health, Comfort and Beauty.”—P. P. CLAXTON, *Commissioner of Education of the United States.*